

# The Golden Rule

In Matthew 7:12, Jesus gave us the essence of His Father's ethical commandments concerning our treatment of others. These words are often



He is the Lord  
God! See  
Genesis 15:2;  
Numbers 14:17;  
Deuteronomy  
3:24; Matthew  
4:7; Hebrews  
1:10.

referred to as "The Golden Rule." This rule is golden for at least two reasons. First, a "rule" is an authoritative standard or principle given to regulate conduct. It is called "golden" because it is understood to be above all others in purity. It meant to guide our conduct toward what is best and most holy. Second, a "rule" is also a standard of measurement. It measures and establishes absolute truth to be authentic and accurate. We can measure ourselves and see how we need to realign with what is right and good.

The Context of the Rule: The word "therefore" draws us back to the words that precede this verse. We see that Jesus taught through prayer about His Father's care for us (7:7-11). Our Heavenly Father is good to us. Jesus, therefore, called us to imitate the goodness that God shows to us. We see this same goodness commanded in other verses (Matthew 7:1-5; 5:17-20, 27-37). Jesus calls us to heed and obey; it is a summary statement of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Measure of the Rule: In the phrase, "whatever you want men to do to you..." The word "men" (*anthropos*) doesn't mean "males only," rather it is "people." Therefore, we are to consider what we would want "people" to do to us. A literal way to translate this may be, "all things therefore, as much as it ever occurs, that you may wish that people may do to you..." Ask this question: "What would I want people to do to me in a similar situation?" We must measure the situation with Jesus as our standard and act appropriately.

The Practice of the Rule: Jesus said, "do also to them." The Golden Rule has a long history in a wide range of cultures, prominent religious figures, and philosophers. Simon Blackburn said the Golden Rule can be "found in some form in almost every ethical tradition." For example, others said, "What you avoid suffering yourself, seek not to inflict upon others" (Epictetus). "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself" (Confucius). "That which you hate to be done to you, do not do to another" (Ancient Egypt). However, these ancient sayings are put in *negative* form (i.e., "What you DON'T want done to you, DON'T do to others"). However, Jesus stated His rule in a **positive** form that focuses on **positive** action. Think about it. If all I wanted to do was passively NOT do to someone else what I don't want done to me, then all I would have to do is NOTHING at all! Yet, if I seek to actively do to others what I want done to me, I must think, evaluate, measure, love and take life seriously (Philippians 2:3)!

The Scope of the Rule: Jesus said, "for this is the Law and the Prophets." In other words, this rule—in positive form—is the essence of what was commanded in the Old Testament regarding human relations (Leviticus 19:18). The key is LOVE! It is sacrificially putting the needs of the person loved on an equal or higher level than your own. That kind of love fulfills the law of God with respect to our treatment of others (Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; Matthew 22:37-40). The Golden Rule is the summation and essence of the Law of God. Practice makes perfect...right?

## Giving and Forgiving—Godlike Characteristics

**To all our visitors:** *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few "family" announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord's Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and Gospel preaching from the Bible.

Any response is up to you and will be kindly received.

*We are glad you decided to worship God with us!*

**Bday/Anniv Lunch:** 2nd Sunday!

**Friday Bible Study:** 7 to 8 PM;

Special study about "Abiding" in the word of the Lord...

**NMCCH:** Thank you for the SOUP donations!